

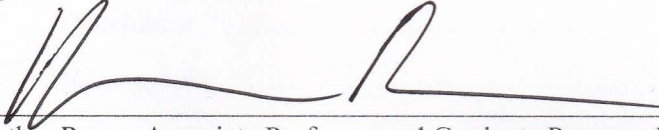
TRANSNATIONALS;
OR,
THE MODERN FRANKENSTEIN.

Transnationals; or, The Modern Frankenstein.

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture in the Department of Sculpture of the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island

by
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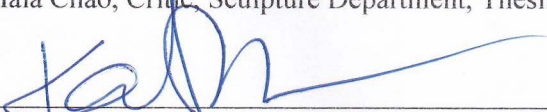
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Abstract

"Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow."

The title of this thesis is adapted from the title of Mary Shelley's 1818 novel *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*, and the quote above is said by the scientist in the novel. To associate the word "Frankenstein" with "transnationals" is not to refer to the transnational as the monster, but to explore the duality of the identity of Frankenstein: Dr. Victor Frankenstein, a privileged scientist who studies abroad and achieves a scientific breakthrough; and the Creature, a subject who experiences discrimination and oppression as the other in his assimilation into the world.

Kai Ji's written portion of his thesis is a short adaptation of Shelley's original novel. The intention is to use the original characters of the novel to explore the identity of border-crossing transnationals and their relationship with nation states. Different from the original story, in the adaptation, the Creature's body is submissive to Victor Frankenstein's ambition, which demonstrates the interdependence between the maker and his creation.

Based on this adaptation, two short experimental films are done on 16mm clear leader, with pigment on the film surface developed from the coating of M&Ms. The material choice of M&Ms speaks to Ji's professional background as a former marketer of the brand.

Introduction

Mary Shelley's 1818 novel *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* tells the story of scientist Victor Frankenstein and his attempt to achieve the impossible by creating a lifeform from the raw materials of dead human bodies. The scientist eventually succeeds, but the result is not what he wished for.

"Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow."

This is what the scientist tells the explorer Walton near the end of the story. They encounter each other on their journey to the North Pole, where the scientist is chasing his creature. The explorer, with his crew, is on a difficult journey trying to locate the North Pole.

Like the explorer, I am also a man on a journey. I am from Guangzhou, China, and that was the only city I ever lived in until I came to RISD. In Canton, I studied business for my undergraduate degree. Afterward, I worked as a marketer for multinational companies, and my jobs allowed me to travel outside of China for business meetings and training. During these trips, my visits to museums reignited my long-held passions for art and design. With savings from my corporate salary, I decided to pursue an MFA.

My thesis title "Transnationals; or, The Modern Frankenstein," is adapted from the title of Shelley's novel. When people hear "Frankenstein," many think it refers to

the Creature, but it actually is the name of the scientist. "Frankenstein," as a word in modern language, is often associated with monstrosity. For me, equating transnationals with Frankenstein is certainly not to refer to the transnational as a monster, but to first put them as both of the key characters in the novel: the scientist who endeavors to cross a line and bring forth life from death, as transnationals are crossing borders in pursuit of their life goals, whatever they may be; secondly, to refer to the transnational as the Creature in the novel, a subject that others do not understand because of his strangeness and who was put under oppression.

The original story follows the storyline of rebirth, othering, assimilation, and then request/resolve.

My entry point to the story is about an oppressed subject's experience of othering while finding his place in the world. This is apparent in the original storyline: Everywhere the Creature goes, he faces bias and receives horrible treatment because of the way he looks. Time and time again, he has doors shut in front of him.

I have experienced traumatic events of racism during my time at RISD. I was initially enrolled in the graduate program of furniture design. My cohort consisted mostly of white students from North America; I was the only non-Caucasian international student. During the first class of the 2020-2021 academic year, everyone was assigned a workspace for the year. But I was assigned to sit separately from the rest of the students by my former graduate program director, Patty Johnson. When I asked why, another faculty member, Tyler Inman, said that

it was because I was odd. Not one classmate broke their silence about this modern-day segregation.

After that moment, I filed a complaint to the Office of Institutional Discrimination, where I encountered more discrimination. As a non-native English speaker, I was questioned about my understanding of the word "odd." In their understanding, the word "odd" meant the odd number. In the end, it is not surprising that these professors are still teaching at the school because there is a system at this institution that protects them. Since I refused to tolerate the discrimination, the aggression from the furniture design department kept escalating. Their message was loud and clear: either I shut up or they will put a stop to my MFA study by lowering my GPA.

In the original novel, the Creature managed to escape abuse in Ingolstadt by moving to the countryside and seeking shelter with the benevolent De Lacey family. Eventually, I was fortunate enough to transfer to the sculpture department to finish my thesis year.

Right under the context of othering comes assimilation. The Creature, in the novel, who learned the language of his creator, read books and acquired knowledge. Similarly, transnationals are also studying the knowledge of others. However, one's assimilation is another's transgression. Transnationals are crossing the lines of borders. Just as the scientist faced unknowns when bringing dead human parts to life, there is a great deal of risk for transnationals. In the context of COVID and hatred against East Asians, discrimination and attacks are daily and everywhere. Acts of racism and xenophobia will eventually force transnationals to face the fact

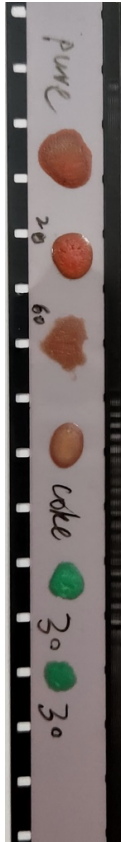
that they are the forever other, regardless of years of assimilation. This is strangely similar to the Creature's conclusion after numerous doors were shut in his face.

The rest of the development of the story (request/resolve) is where my thoughts diverge with the original novel. Without revealing the story, I will come back to it at the end of my thesis.

The structure of the book follows two storylines: one is my adapted manuscript, the other is the original novel. Both stories start with an online summary by Jeff Coghill. About halfway through the book, the reader will be exposed to two storylines: my adapted manuscript typed on a typewriter, while the original story continues in the laser-printed text, summarized in my words with quotes from Shelley's writing.

These two stories serve as a conceptual script for my thesis project which are two experimental cameraless films done on 16mm clear leader. Examples of the physical film are presented throughout the book as original artwork. The key material I used on the film surface is the coating of M&Ms developed into pigment. The tactility of the experimental film, together with the stamping of the letter "M" on the candy, inspired me to type my adapted manuscript on a typewriter.

The material choice of M&Ms speaks to my professional background as a former marketer, since M&Ms was one of the brands I served on. I intend to transform this ubiquitous snack into a symbol of the transnational body, that is skinned to its bone. The developed pigment from the skin will be preserved on film as a specimen for the RISD library collection.



Rebirth, May 2022. M&M pigment on 16mm film.

Transnationals; or, The Modern Frankenstein.

The key protagonist of the story is Victor Frankenstein. The story begins not long before his birth.

His father, although as of yet unnamed, is Alphonse Frankenstein, who was involved heavily in the affairs of his country and thus delayed marriage until late in life. Alphonse quits public life to become a father and husband.

Victor's father and Mr. Beaufort, his mother Caroline's father, had a congenial relationship. Mr. Beaufort and his daughter move from Geneva to Lucerne, Switzerland to seek refuge from poverty and a damaged reputation. Alphonse sets out to aid his lost friend to "begin the world again through his credit and assistance."

While in Lucerne, Beaufort had saved a small amount of money and had recovered his reputation somewhat, but he became ill and within a few months had died. When Alphonse finds the Beaufort home, he discovers an impoverished Caroline grieving at her father's coffin. Alphonse gives his friend a decent burial and sends Caroline to his family in Geneva to recover. During a two-year period, Alphonse visits Caroline and they eventually became husband and wife.

Seeking a better climate, the couple moves to Italy for a short period. During this time, Victor was born and lavished with attention. He was their only child for five years until Caroline comes across an impoverished family in need of help. She falls for a beautiful little girl who is Victor's age and asks the family if she could adopt her. The little girl, Elizabeth, becomes Victor's adopted cousin and playmate.

Around the age of seven, Victor's younger brother is born. Up to this point, he and Elizabeth have been the primary receivers of their parents' love. Their parents decide to settle down in Geneva to concentrate on raising their family.

Victor introduces his life-long friend Henry Clerval, a creative child who studies literature and folklore.

At the age of 13, Victor discovers the works of Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, and Albertus Magnus, all alchemists from an earlier age. His voracious appetite for knowledge thus begins, and eventually leads him to study science and alchemy. At age 15, Victor witnesses an electrical storm that peaks his interest in electricity and possible applications for its use.

Victor is now 17 years old and ready to become a student at the University of Ingolstadt in Ingolstadt, Germany (near Munich), but an outbreak of scarlet fever at home delays his departure. His mother and "cousin" both fight the disease; Caroline Beaufort Frankenstein dies, and Elizabeth recovers. Before Caroline dies, she reveals her unrealized plans for the marriage of Victor and Elizabeth by saying, "my firmest hopes of the future happiness were placed on the prospect of your union."

Elizabeth becomes the family caretaker upon Caroline's death. Victor finds it hard to say goodbye to his family and dear friend, but he sets out for Ingolstadt to begin his studies in science.

Victor meets his mentors, Professor M. Krempe and Professor M. Waldman, at the university. He does not like Krempe, but he does find Waldman a much more conducive and congenial teacher.

Victor throws himself into his schoolwork, reading all he can about the sciences, particularly chemistry. Gaining a reputation as a scientist and innovator among the professors and fellow students alike. Believing his tenure at Ingolstadt was nearing an end, Victor thinks of returning home to Geneva. However, he launches into a new venue of scientific experimentation — creating life from death and reanimating a dead body.

Visiting morgues and cemeteries for the necessary body parts, Victor fails several times before successfully bringing his creation to life. His work does take its toll on him, affecting his health and powers of judgment. This gruesome work carries on through the spring, summer, and fall of that year.

Victor lives for his work and throws himself into his pursuit so much that he shuts off all contact with the outside world. In the second summer Victor loses touch with his family. Letters from home go unanswered for long periods of time, and he delays sending a message home as to his health or wellbeing.

Victor succeeds in bringing his creation, an eight-foot man, to life in November of his second year. Excited and disgusted at "the monster" he had created, he runs from the apartment.

He wanders the streets of Ingolstadt until Henry Clerval finds him in poor condition. Henry had come to see about his friend and to enroll at the university. Henry and Victor return to Victor's apartment to find the monster gone. Victor finds the disappearance of his monster a source of joy and falls down in a fit of exhaustion from the release of anxiety over his creation. Henry spends the rest of the winter and spring nursing Victor

back to health after the tumultuous fall. Henry advises Victor to write home, as a letter had recently arrived from his family in Geneva.

Elizabeth's letter is the kind one would expect from a concerned family member. It is full of news from home that delights Victor and restores him to better health. Elizabeth tells of Justine Moritz, the Frankenstein's housekeeper and confidant. Even though Justine was treated poorly by her own family, she is a martyr for being a good, loyal friend to the Frankenstein family.

Victor introduces Henry to his professors, who praise Victor highly. Victor and Henry begin their studies together, studying ancient and foreign languages in order to engage their minds. Both men are happy to be hard-working college students.

Plans are made for Victor to return to Geneva in the fall, after his spring recovery, but weather and other delays make the trip impossible, and winter sets in. He revises his plans to depart in May.¹

On the other hand,

After fleeing the city and villages where he is not welcomed, the monster learns to live in the forest. Food is sometimes stolen, and shelter is scarce. He does manage to find a "hovel" attached to a small cottage. He fashions a way to see into the cottage and begins to observe the life of the De Lacey family— brother Felix, sister Agatha, and their blind father — who lives in the small home.

The monster notices the care and concern the family has for each other, and he senses that there is a mood of despair among the younger family members. The family suffers from poverty and a lack of food. Originally a well-to-do family from France, the De Lacey's have been exiled from France to Germany. The monster learns the French language from the family and practices those words by himself. Desiring to keep his cottagers happy, the monster becomes an aid to the family by secretly hauling wood to the cottage and performing repairs, all under the cover of darkness. He begins to follow a routine of daily activity and time passes from winter to spring.

The monster relates how Felix reunites with his lost love, Safie, a woman of Turkish descent. Felix had rescued Safie's father from death in France and had placed her in the protection of a convent of nuns. She arrives in Germany just barely literate. Felix is overjoyed to see her again. Safie makes an earnest attempt to learn the De Lacey's language, which benefits the monster in learning a language as well. While listening to the conversations in the house, the monster gets a brief but memorable lesson in the history of Europe. Content in his hiding place, he calls the De Lacey family his "protectors."

The De Lacey family history is told through this chapter. The monster tells that the family was once well regarded in France with wealth and social position. Felix aides Safie's father in a plot to subvert the biased French justice system and free the Turkish merchant from death on the gallows. The discovery of the plot by the French authorities causes the ruin of the De Lacey family, as the government confiscates the De Lacey's wealth for their aid in the escape of Safie's father. Safie also must endure her own trials to find her benefactors in a foreign country.

The monster begins his own education, reading the books and notes that he found in Victor's jacket in the nearby woods. In the jacket pocket are Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Plutarch's *Lives of Illustrious Greeks and Romans*, and Goethe's *Sorrows of Werter*. The list is a virtual required reading list of books that are all influenced by the Romantic movement in England.

Plutarch compares and contrasts the lives of Greek and Roman statesmen or soldiers for historical perspective. Goethe's work is a novel of letters written by a youth who is very sensitive and steadfast, who kills himself after being so uncompromising and idealistic. Milton's book is about the creation story and Adam, which causes the monster to question his own creation and place in the world. Finally, the monster discovers Victor's own notebooks, which explain how the monster came into existence. The monster is both intrigued and horrified at learning how he came into existence.

The monster also sees that his "adopted family" is doing better with the arrival of Safie.ⁱⁱ

From here on, the story breaks into two story lines. Follow the square pages for the story line of Shelley's original writing; follow the narrower page for Kai Ji's adapted manuscript.

The creature has thought long and hard about how to join this family. He longs for their company and affection. In the end, he thinks he should seize the opportunity when the old man is alone to introduce himself, and hopes that without being able to see his face, the ~~old~~ old man might be more willing to establish contact with him.

One day, while all the young ~~xx~~ family ~~xxx~~ members are out, the old man is ~~alone~~ alone at home. ~~w~~ With a full heart and nervousness, he decides that this is the day.

Sound of door knock.

De Lacey: ~~Who~~ Who is there?

Pause ~~for~~ for silence.

De ~~Lacey~~ Lacey: Come in.

~~Creature~~

~~Creature~~

Creature opens the door.

Creature: Sorry for the intrusion. I am a ~~RAF~~ traveler, and I am trapped ~~by~~ by the snowstorm outside. Could I come in and rest for a while? I ~~would~~ would appreciate if you can allow me to sit for a few minutes near the fire.

De Lacey: Please enter.

Creature enters the room.

De Lacey: Please take a seat. Much as I want to be a

The creature thinks long and hard about how to join this family. He longs for their company and affection. In the end, he thinks he should seize the opportunity when the old man is alone to introduce himself, and hopes that without being able to see his face, the old man might be more willing to establish contact with him.

One day, while all the young family members are out, the old man is alone at home. With a full heart and nervousness, he introduces himself to the elder De Lacey. The two carry out a conversation by the fire. Slowly, the Creature opens up and tells De Lacey that his intends to seek protection from a kind family.

"They are kind—they are the most excellent creatures in the world; but, unfortunately, they are prejudiced against me. I have good dispositions; my life has been hitherto harmless and in some degree beneficial; but a fatal prejudice clouds their eyes, and where they ought to see a feeling and kind friend, they behold only a detestable monster.'

"That is indeed unfortunate; but if you are really blameless, cannot you undeceive them?"

"I am about to undertake that task; and it is on that account that I feel so many overwhelming terrors. I tenderly love these friends; I have, unknown to them, been for many months in the habits of daily kindness towards them; but they believe that I wish to injure them, and it is that prejudice which I wish to overcome.'

"Where do these friends reside?'

"Near this spot."ⁱⁱⁱ

Without enough time to explain to the old man that the De Lacey family is the one he is seeking protection from. The rest of the family members come back and find the Creature in their cottage. Horrified, Felix attacks the Creature. The Creature refrains from fighting back and instead leaves and quietly returns to his hovel.

The next day, the De Lacey family leaves the cottage. Angry and saddened by the rejection of the De Lacey family, the Creature burns down the cottage and leaves. He then travels southwest, hoping to

~~xxx~~ great host and serve you some food. I am afraid I won't be able to because I am blind, and my children are ~~away~~ away ~~far~~ from home.

Creature: No need to bother yourself, my kind host. All I need is some warmth and a rest.

~~S~~ A moment of silence.

De ~~Lacey~~ Lacey: What's your name, stranger?

~~Creature~~

Creature: My ~~is~~ name...

~~The~~
The Creature pauses for a ~~thought~~ thought.

~~Creature~~

~~Creature~~

Creature: Please ~~call~~ call me "Frankenstein."

De Lacey: Mr. Frankenstein, where are you from? I suppose you are from France since you speak the same ~~language~~ language as me.

Creature: No, but I learned the language recently.

De Lacey: Where are you ~~going~~ going?

~~Creature~~

Creature: I ~~am~~ am ~~going~~ going to seek protection from the world with the family, whom I love dearly.

De Lacey: I ~~assume~~ assume you know them well. When ~~did~~ did you last see them?

Creature: ~~I~~ I saw them recently. They are the kindest souls I know, ~~but~~ but they have never seen me.

De Lacey: ~~Are~~ Are they expecting your arrival?

Creature: No, they ~~don't~~ don't know my existence.

A moment of silence.

~~If I may ask, how do you~~

De ~~Lacey~~ Lacey: If I may ask, how do you trust ~~them~~ them so much?

~~I~~ Creature: I've been observing their lives for a while. There are a number of times I wanted to introduce myself to them but I ~~had~~ have not had the courage, so I waited.

De Lacey: Why are you so afraid to meet them?

Creature: I am afraid if I was rejected, I will have no ~~friends~~ friends on earth.

De Lacey: I don't know what drove you to such despair. To be friendless is indeed unfortunate, but I am sure if they are as kind as ~~you~~ you believe, they would be happy to take you as a ~~friend~~ friend. Even if you are ~~friendless~~ friendless, you could always rely on your ~~family~~ family. ~~Please~~ Please be hopeful.

Creature: These people are the closet thing to my family. My born family abandoned me at birth.

De Lacey: My poor fellow, I am sorry to hear that. I can feel your sorrow from the way you speak.

arrive at Geneva, where the scientist is from. He travels mostly at night, avoiding being seen by man. With fatigue and hunger, he finally arrives at Geneva, that's when he sees William Frankenstein.

Suddenly, as I gazed on him, an idea seized me that this little creature was unprejudiced and had lived too short a time to have imbibed a horror of deformity. If, therefore, I could seize him and educate him as my companion and friend, I should not be so desolate in this peopled earth.^{iv}

William, however, is horrified by the Creature's deformity and cries out loud. From William's words, the Creature learns that he is a child of the Frankenstein family. The Creature decides to make the boy the first victim in his fight with his enemy.

After killing William, the Creature takes the locket from the boy, which has a portrait of William's mother. The Creature flees the scene of the murder and hides in a barn, where he finds Justine sleeping in the hay. He puts the locket securely in the folds of Justine's dress.

After the tragic death of William, Alphonse Frankenstein writes a letter to Victor, telling him of the tragedy and asking him to go back to his family immediately. After a brief goodbye with Clerval, Victor sets off to his journey back home. When he arrives in Geneva, he realizes that it has been six years since he left home and two years since he created the Creature. That night, as Victor wanders outside of Geneva, because the gate into the city is closed, he sees the Creature.

... I perceived in the gloom a figure which stole from behind a clump of trees near me; I stood fixed, gazing intently: I could not be mistaken. A flash of lightning illuminated the object, and discovered its shape plainly to me; its gigantic stature, and the deformity of its aspect more hideous than belongs to humanity, instantly informed me that it was the wretch, the filthy daemon, to whom I had given life. What did hether? Could he be (I shuddered at the conception) the murderer of my brother? No sooner did that idea cross my imagination, than I became convinced of its truth; myteeth chattered, and I was forced to lean against a tree forsupport. The figure passed me quickly, and I lost it in thegloom.^v

Creature: I was born with a ~~a~~ hideous look. My parents abandoned me because of this. I've since lived on my ~~o~~ own, relying on the food I found. People around me are also frightened because of the way I look.

Creature stops and starts to sob. De Lacey slowly moves ~~a~~ toward the creature and offers his hand to the creature. Creature takes De Lacey's hand.

Creature: ~~Throughin~~g~~ Th~~o~~u~~ Throughout my life, I have never meant to cause harm to anyone. But prejudice has just been based upon by the ~~way~~ way I look, and ~~via~~ violence toward me drove me to despair. I have questioned the meaning of living because I feel trapped in this world.

De Lacey: I know the feeling of being trapped because I was taken as a prisoner, and I was abused ~~don~~ during my ~~captiv~~it~~~~ captivity. I would be lying if I said that the thought of ending my life has not crossed my mind.

Creature: What keeps you alive ~~don~~ during desperate time? Is it the thought of seeing your family?

De ~~Lacey~~ Lacey: Yes, mainly, and the happiness that I've had ~~don~~ before. My beloved wife has passed away, but I am blessed that my ~~daught~~er~~~~ daughter and son were raised to be ~~xxx~~ great people.

Creature: They are really hardworking people and have ~~don~~ done a lot to keep life pleasant for the household.

De Lacey: Do you, by any chance, know them?

Creature ~~x~~ hesitates.

Creature: I passed by this place a few times and have seen how ~~diff~~ difficult it is for them to take care of the land. From time to time, I helped them with their harvest, but I don't think that they knew I ~~did~~ did.

De Lacey: Dear Lord. You are so kind. ~~Without~~ Without your help, we would have had no way to get through the winter with such limited harvest. This extreme weather has made farm work difficult. My children were not raised to perform hard labor. They are doing their best, but it's ~~longer~~ tough. Would you care to stay until they come back so that I can introduce you to them? I want them to thank you in person.

Creature: I do want to meet them. But I ~~don't~~ don't want to frighten them by my look.

~~ED De Lacey~~

~~De~~ De Lacey and the Creature continues their talk deep into the ~~night~~ night, but the ~~creature~~ Creature leaves ~~before~~ before the rest of the De Lacey family comes back. They agree to stay in touch and wait for the ~~right~~ right ~~time~~ time for the old man to introduce ~~him~~ him to ~~the~~ the family.

After the first encounter ~~is~~ between De Lacey and the Creature, they ~~carry~~ carry out multiple ~~meetings~~ meetings just between the two of them. During these conversations, the Creature learns more about the ~~life~~ life of the old man, who used to be a man of prominent status in his own country. His family helped a wrongfully convicted prisoner escape imprisonment. The father was kept in prison but was later released on ~~the~~ the condition that the family leave the country.

The next day when he arrives home, he learns that Justine has been arrested for the murder. He tells his family not to worry because he believes Justine will not be found guilty. However, he cannot go further to explain his conviction without telling his family the whole story. His creation had crossed a key line. Without revealing the Creature, he can offer little help to prove Justine's innocence.

Even with Elizabeth's defense, Justine is sentenced to death of the murder of William Frankenstein. Another innocent life is lost. Victor is tortured by his internal conflict of protecting his family and risking his reputation by telling the truth of the murder and his creation.

One day, Victor is out alone on the hill where he spent time with his deceased brother. Then all of a sudden, the Creature shows up in front of him. At the sight of the Creature, Victor is horrified, but he is prepared to engage in a battle to destroy his creature. The Creature tries to reason with Victor and asks him to hear his side of the story.

"...Listen to me, Frankenstein. You accuse me of murder, and yet you would, with a satisfied conscience, destroy your own creature. Oh, praise the eternal justice of man! Yet I ask you

not to spare me; listen to me, and then, if you can, and if you will, destroy the work of your hands."^{vi}

Desperate to confirm the murder of his brother, Victor decides to give the Creature a chance. He also feels a sense of duty toward his creature for the first time. The two sit in a hub, and the Creature tells the scientist what he has been through in the last two years, the De Lacey family, the attack from other men, the murder of William, and the plan to frame Justine.

Eventually, the Creature summarizes and puts forward his proposition.

"...We may not part until you have promised to comply with my requisition. I am alone and miserable; man will not associate with me; but one as deformed and horrible as myself would not deny herself to me. My companion must be of the same species and have the same defects. This being you must create."^{vii}

The family was later forced into exile.

Meanwhile, the Creature also has a chance to tell his own story. He finds a notebook from the scientist, which details the process in which he created the Creature. The Creature reads the scientist's journal to the old man. Time and time again, the old man is horrified by the documentation and events that has happened after the Creature ~~left~~ left the lab of the ~~scientist~~ scientist. He also feels sympathetic to the Creature.

Months pass. These two ~~beings~~ beings build a friendship between them. They tell stories to each ~~other~~ other that have never been shared with others. For the ~~first~~ first time, the old man is able to tell someone else the torture he had experienced during his imprisonment. He was beaten and sexually ~~assaulted~~ assaulted by the prison guards. Those were the darkest days of his life.

Something changes inside the Creature when he hears this story. If a man of ~~such~~ the status of De Lacey can survive such falls, and rebuild a life for himself ~~too~~ during exile, maybe there is hope for himself, too. What they have is too precious to risk, so he still hesitates to meet the old man's family.

One day, during another conversation between them, the old man proposes an idea. If the scientist is ~~capable~~ capable of creating a lifeform, he must be able to fix the Creature's ~~deformity~~ deformity if the Creature desires. Though they do not know how to convince the ~~scientist~~ scientist to perform such procedure, this seems like something worth ~~trying~~ trying. The Creature ~~thinks~~

then sets ~~off~~ off toward Switzerland to find his creator, the ~~scientist~~ scientist, Victor Frankenstein.

Two ~~months~~ months passes and he finally arrives at his ~~destin~~ destination. Geneva, to him, feels ~~differe~~ different. He also misses the De Lacey ~~family~~ family and wonder what has happened since he left. Exhausted, he finds a resting place by the tree trunk and falls asleep.

Suddenly, a ~~scree~~ scream wakes him. The Creature opens his eyes and sees a young child in front of him. Shocked and unable to move, the child ~~xxx~~ drops the ball that was in his hands and could not stop ~~screeam~~ screaming. ~~x~~ Also ~~fr~~ frightened and not knowing what to do, the creature gets up and puts his ~~hands~~ hands over the mouth of the child. At first, the child struggles, trying to ~~g~~ get away. But after a few minutes, he stops. The Creature realizes that the child has fainted.

Now, Justine has ~~fx~~ followed the sound of William's ~~screeaming~~ screaming and approaches, shouting, "William, where are you?" The Creature, not wanting ~~x~~ to frighten another soul, quickly hides himself behind the tree, but observes who is going to show up. ~~xxxx~~ Justine first sees ball ~~xxx~~ on the grass, then ~~xxx~~ discovers William laying on the ground. Anxious, ~~shxxx~~ she quickly runs to William, only to find out the boy, her young master that she nursed, has ~~x~~ stopped breathing. She screams frantically as she ~~x~~ ~~xxx~~ holds the boy.

All this happens ~~rixxx~~ right in front of the Creature. He ~~x~~ realizes he just killed an innocent being.

At a certain point, Victor's rage has partially died, especially when the Creature describes his peaceful life among the cottagers. But hearing this outrageous request, he shouted:

"...no torture shall ever extort a consent from me. You may render me the most miserable of men, but you shall never make me base in my own eyes. Shall I create another like yourself, whose joint wickedness might desolate the world. Begone! I have answered you; you may torture me, but I will never consent."^{viii}

The Creature warns of the consequence.

"... if I cannot inspire love, I will cause fear, and chiefly towards you my archenemy, because my creator, do I swear inextinguishable hatred. Have a care; I will work at your destruction, nor finish until I desolate your heart, so that you shall curse the hour of your birth."^{ix}

The Creature also tries to reason with Victor.

"... for that one creature's sake I would make peace with the whole kind! But I now indulge in dreams of bliss that cannot be realized. What I ask of you is reasonable and moderate; I demand a creature of another sex, but as hideous as myself; the gratification is small, but it is all that I can receive, and it shall content me. It is true, we shall be monsters, cut off from all the world; but on that account we shall be more attached to one another..."^x

The scientist debates internally about this request.

His words had a strange effect upon me. I compassionated him and sometimes felt a wish to console him, but when I looked upon him, when I saw the filthy mass that moved and talked, my heart sickened and my feelings were altered to those of horror and hatred. I tried to stifle these sensations; I thought that as I could not sympathize with him, I had no right to withhold from him the small portion of happiness which was yet in my power to bestow.

Without much time to process what happened, he senses more people approaching, as he can see the light of the torches. Carefully, he ~~xxxxx~~ escapes in the opposite direction, leaving the scene of the crime.

Later that evening, as he looks at his reflection on the water, he finally sees what others see in him: a monster. He feels sorry for the boy, but all these have confirmed what he ~~xxxx~~ has set off to do, which is to find his maker and fix his deformity. If he looked normal, this wouldn't have happened.

Later that week, as the Creature walks around the town, wearing the hooded black coat that he has. He feels blended in, as the whole town is wearing dark colors to mourn the loss of the young child.

Murder like this is a rare incident in this town and definitely breaks the normal atmosphere around. The Creature picks up a newspaper on the street and finds that the boy he ~~killx~~ killed happens to be the younger sibling of Victor Frankenstein, his maker that he is trying to seek help ~~fxk~~ from.

Hearing the news, Victor rushes home. Upon arrival, he realizes it had been six year since he left. ~~Sax~~ Sad about the loss of his brother, he meets his family. Elizabeth is relieved to finally see Victor. His arrival brings comfort to a family in mourning.

The Creature is very careful when around people. He is terrified of what this town might do to him if they see his face, and he is also unsure of what he would ~~do~~ do to the ~~townspeople~~ townspeople if he gets ~~attacked~~ attacked. It has been two years since he left ~~thou~~ the

lab of the scientist, so he is not sure how Victor would react when he sees him. Although there is no proof linking him to the death of William, he is sure that if he shows up in front of Victor now, ~~he~~ he would link one thing to another.

The Creature also thinks that Victor would restrain himself when he shows up. Victor would not want the town to find out that he had created a monster. But meeting Victor is one thing. Convincing him to perform the face surgery is another. The Creature ~~thinks~~ thinks ~~of~~ of ~~a~~ the man in distress. He feels guilty for the death of the young boy, but he is also sure that this is not his own doing. Only Victor can fix this one and for all. He thinks about giving up because the chance that ~~Victor~~ ~~Victor~~ Victor would agree to this is small. He thinks about ~~giving up because~~ going back to the De Lacey family, ~~but~~ but after what happened to William, he genuinely thinks that he should not be with people until his ~~deform~~ deformities are ~~fix~~ fixed. Otherwise, it would only bring terror and harm to the people that ~~he cares for~~ he cares for. He'd rather spend the ~~a~~ rest of ~~his~~ his time alone than to bring harm to that kind family.

One day, ~~Victor~~ Victor is out alone, still mourning his brother, hoping to find some sort of healing ~~for~~ from the surrounding ~~land~~ ~~landscape~~ landscape that he loved, on the hill where he spent time with his deceased ~~brother~~ brother. Then all of a sudden, the ~~Creature~~ Creature shows up in front of him. At the sight of the Creature, Victor is horrified. It is exactly the same as he remembers: a gigantic figure with a deformed face, moving in superhuman speed.

"You swear," I said, "to be harmless; but have you not already shown a degree of malice that should reasonably make me distrust you? May not even this be a feint that will increase your triumph by affording a wider scope for your revenge?"^{xi}

The Creature reassures Victor of his intention.

"...If I have no ties and no affections, hatred and vice must be my portion; the love of another will destroy the cause of my crimes, and I shall become a thing of whose existence everyone will be ignorant..."^{xii}

"If you consent, neither you nor any other human being shall ever see us again; I will go to the vast wilds of South America..."^{xiii}

The scientist feels obligated to this request partly due to the duty he has as the maker of this creature. More importantly, he thinks about the potential danger he is putting his fellow humans in if he rejects the request. Victor eventually agrees to the request.

Victor sets off on his journey to London with Henry Clerval, secretly planning the creation of a companion for the Creature. Before he leaves home, he promises his family that he will marry Elizabeth once he returns. Midway through their trip, Victor parts with Clerval and carries out his plan on a remote island, focusing on fulfilling the Creature's request. He is deep into his work at the lab, when one night, he stops working due to insufficient light. He debates again on his promise to the Creature.

As I sat, a train of reflection occurred to me which led me to consider the effects of what I was now doing. Three years before, I was engaged in the same manner and had created a fiend whose unparalleled barbarity had desolated my heart and filled it forever with the bitterest remorse. I was now about to form another being of whose dispositions I was alike ignorant; she might become ten thousand times more malignant than her mate and delight, for its own sake, in murder and wretchedness. He had sworn to quit the neighbourhood of man and hide himself in deserts, but she had not; and she, who in all probability was to become a thinking and reasoning animal, might refuse to comply with a compact made before her creation. They might even hate each other; the creature who already lived loathed his own deformity, and might he not

Creature: Don't be alarmed. I am not here to harm you today. But I have something to say.

Victor: Go away, you monster. Your face digusts me. I have nothing to say to you.

The Creature has thought of this rejection.

~~Victor~~ Creature: ~~y~~ You will want to listen to me if ~~you~~ you don't want to cause more danger to ~~innocent~~ innocent lives.

Victor hears that and immediately links this to the death of William.

Victor: ~~You~~ You ~~are~~ monster, you killed my brother. Murderer.

Creature: I am responsible for his death as much as you. You ~~are~~ created me, and you abandoned me. My visit to your town was not to harm anyone, but to make a request to you. He's just a ~~casualty~~ casualty. He would not stop yelling. In my effort to make him stop, I accidentally suffocate ~~him~~ him.

Victor: Why would I believe you?

Creature: Your brother is as horrified as you ~~are~~ are when he saw my face. These past two years since you ~~are~~ abandoned me, everywhere I go, people hate me because of the way I look. I was lucky to find protection with a family, but in order to meet them, I need you to fix my deformity, especially my face.

~~Victor~~ Victor: I will not try to fix your face so that

you can look like my race. ~~you know~~ You belong to a different kind.

Creature: If you really care about your race, you should fix me. I've told you what they have done to me and I've shown you what I can do under desperation. All I want is to look normal, and to live among my family and be far away from everyone else. You don't ~~have~~ have to decide now. I reside on the top of the ~~hill~~ hill. When you have your ~~answer~~ answer, come see me but do know that I'll not surrender without putting up a ~~fight~~ fight.

In a flash, the Creature disappears.

Victor reflects on the options. He now feels ~~responsible~~ responsible for the death of William. After all, he did create ~~him~~ the creature. But more than his sympathy for the creature, he feels it was his duty not to cause any harm to his race. After all, this ~~scientific~~ scientific endeavor was meant to bring progress to the mankind rather than causing harm. But on the other hand, he ~~was~~ has the option to lure ~~him~~ the creature away from Geneva, which can protect his family, but ~~secretly~~ secretly plan to kill him during the surgical procedure.

After a few agonizing days, he agrees to the ~~creature's~~ creature's proposal. He sets ~~off~~ off back to his lab in Ingolstadt for this endeavor. The Frankenstein family is puzzled by Victor's sudden departure, and they are kept in the dark about this operation. Upon arriving at his lab, he throws himself into experimenting with ways to carry out the surgery. ~~This~~ This time, though, he ~~doesn't~~ does not have his

conceive a greater abhorrence for it when it came before his eyes in the female form? She also might turn with disgust from him to the superior beauty of man; she might quit him, and he be again alone, exasperated by the fresh provocation of being deserted by one of his own species. Even if they were to leave Europe and inhabit the deserts of the new world, yet one of the first results of those sympathies for which the daemon thirsted would be children, and a race of devils would be propagated upon the earth who might make the very existence of the species of man a condition precarious and full of terror. Had I right, for my own benefit, to inflict this curse upon everlasting generations? I had before been moved by the sophisms of the being I had created; I had been struck senseless by his fiendish threats; but now, for the first time, the wickedness of my promise burst upon me; I shuddered to think that future ages might curse me as their pest, whose selfishness had not hesitated to buy its own peace at the price, perhaps, of the existence of the whole human race.^{xiv}

Following these thoughts, Victor tears into pieces his work in progress. The Creature, who follows him from Switzerland to this island, is enraged by what he sees. Before his disappearance, he threatens Victor that he will be with him on his wedding night.

Despite the threat, Victor travels back home to his family and marries Elizabeth as planned. With mixed feelings, he and his newly wedded wife leave for their honeymoon. The Creature shows up on the wedding night and kills Elizabeth. Alphonse Frankenstein, devastated by the death of Elizabeth, dies soon after. Victor swears revenge.

He follows the Creature to the Arctic Circle. The Creature, who knows that Victor is not built for such a strenuous trip, leaves clues and food along the way, so that Victor can keep up. Victor eventually dies as he closes in on the Creature, who is saddened by the death of his maker and loses his will to live.

heart set on the result of the surgery. All while experimenting, he devises a plan to kill the monster during the operation. The monster will be at the mercy of the scientist, and he could do whatever he wants.

The conditions of the lab is terrible and working day and night only adds to the stress Victor already has. The potential planned murder also stresses the scientist.

Victor thinks about the possibilities. What if this is the only creature he is able to ~~create~~ create with his method? Is he about to destroy the result of his ~~scientific~~ scientific achievement? Technically, if this second operation succeeds, he could produce a perfect human form. But what about the mind? How can ~~he~~ he control the mind of this kind? Is that the third step toward the greatest achievement of the experiment? What if the creature kills him after the ~~surgery~~ surgery? What if? What if?

~~Through~~ Throughout all the experimentation, the Creature visits the lab to make sure that the ~~scientist~~ scientist is doing what he promised to do. Though ~~&~~ Victor tries his best to hide his thoughts, the Creature senses something is wrong.

The cold weather and stress put a toll on Victor. His health ~~&~~ deteriorates. Now he falls ill and remains on his bed. The Creature fears this because Victor is his only hope to fix his deformity. The Creature tries his best to help Victor ~~recover~~ recover. He had observed ~~from~~ from the De Lacey family how to take care of the ill. ~~One~~ One ~~night~~ night, Victor suffers from a fever ~~and~~ and is shivering on his bed. So the ~~if~~ ~~&~~

Creature tries to hold him. This is the first time the Creature experiences such close ~~him~~ ~~body~~ bodily contact. The Creature was born with a gigantic ~~statue~~ statue, and was ~~never~~ never in the arms of his maker. There was never a motherly touch laid on him. That ~~night~~ night, they are both sexually aroused.

After ~~Victor~~ Victor recovers, he thinks about how he was taken care of by the Creature while he was ill. He is surprised by the Creature's ability to be nurturing and caring toward another, though he obviously knows that it is in the Creature's best interest to keep ~~it~~ him alive so that he could receive the surgery.

Though he is still disgusted by the look of the Creature, Victor begins to look at this being ~~it~~ ~~as~~ differently. Without thinking too much about the fact that he was aroused, he is also surprised by the fact that the Creature was also aroused, and that he was able to control his urges and not advance his sexual desire. Maybe ~~this Creature~~ his creation is not as animalistic as he had thought.

~~Regarding~~ Regarding the Creature's request to have his deformities fixed, ~~the~~ ~~sex~~ Victor ultimately does not think it is right for a being of a ~~different~~ different race to intermingle with humans. So he ~~does~~ does not ~~think~~ think it is right to proceed with the surgery. But he also thinks that it is meaningful for the Creature ~~to~~ to live and continue to develop to his full potential. Instead of granting the Creature's wishes, he decides to satisfy his own newfound desire: to create a companion for the Creature to produce offspring. If the reproduction proves to be successful, it might be worth the loss of his brother's life.



Hunt, May 2022. M&M pigment on 16mm film.

Conclusion

If readers have followed until the end of both stories, they will see how differently each ends.

In the original novel, the Creature made an unfulfilled request, which was for the scientist to create a female companion, and they would spend their lives together in the North Pole, far away from the human race. But the scientist denied this request. In my opinion, the Creature, as an oppressed subject, has little chance to demand this from his maker. Shelley's writing agrees with this pessimism.

The key difference in my adaptation is that the scientist seems to find a reason to persuade himself to do something about the Creature, which simultaneously furthers his scientific ambition. In my version, the Creature asks for cosmetic surgery to become less monstrous and assimilate into the De Lacey family. The scientist denies this request but instead offers him a companion creature, with hopes of seeing whether they might be able to reproduce. It is the Creature's call to take this offer or live alone for the rest of his existence.

The other difference is that in the original novel, the Creature wishes to live on his own with his newly created companion. This is reasonable given his many difficulties assimilating. In reality, for transnationals, there are costs for border crossing, and in dire situations, it is either border crossing or death in the homeland. There are connections made in their lived experience outside of their own country. It is unrealistic for the transnational to simply choose to terminate their life abroad abruptly. COVID-19 and various lockdowns have also made

border crossing difficult. Even if there is a desire to go back to the home country, one might have to bear continuous forced assimilation.

In concluding my MFA study, the irony is not lost on me that my privilege is what afforded me an overseas education that caused me to suffer racism and xenophobia. As a forever other on foreign land, I have witnessed how globalization and other transnational activities have brought poverty to underprivileged communities in the developed world.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the act of writing this thesis is an artistic endeavor. Conventional views will categorize the original novel as science fiction or a horror story. In my view, it is a story about oppression and endurance. In my writing, the true horror story is the traumatic oppression I experienced while at RISD. This thesis is an act of defiance to put into the RISD archives the story that I would have had no chance to tell. In telling my story, I stand in solidarity with oppressed transnational subjects who have not been able to tell their own versions.

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Endnotes

- ⁱ Jeff Coghill, “CliffsNotes on Frankenstein”, accessed May 4, 2022, <https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/f/frankenstein/frankenstein-at-a-glance>.
- ⁱⁱ Jeff Coghill, “CliffsNotes on Frankenstein,” accessed May 4, 2022, <https://www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/f/frankenstein/frankenstein-at-a-glance>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Shelley 2008, p.197, 198.
- ^{iv} Shelley 2008, p.211.
- ^v Shelley 2008, p.103.
- ^{vi} Shelley 2008, p.144.
- ^{vii} Shelley 2008, p.214, 215.
- ^{viii} Shelley 2008, p.216, 217.
- ^{ix} Shelley 2008, p.217.
- ^x Shelley 2008, p.218.
- ^{xi} Shelley 2008, p.220.
- ^{xii} Shelley 2008, p.221.
- ^{xiii} Shelley 2008, p.219.
- ^{xiv} Shelley 2008, p.250, 251.